

Rep. Al O'Brien & Rep. Mark Ericks

Government Accountability:

You need to know that your tax dollars are used efficiently and effectively. An important part of our job is to ensure that government officials are working for you –acting in the public interest- not for the benefit of powerful and influential special interests. This year we passed several bills to increase government accountability:

Performance Audits: This major reform restores the public's trust by requiring independent performance audits of state agencies.

Improving state agency performance: This reform takes government accountability to a new level. State agencies will create clear goals and strategies to best serve the public. Real data will be collected and evaluated on a regular basis to improve efficiency and reduce costs. This bill will allow for agencies to correct problems sooner and deliver services where they are needed most.

Priorities of government: We want to make sure your tax dollars are spent wisely. The measure focuses on laying out our priorities and ranking them from most important to least. Prioritizing services will require we spend money first on critical services that benefit the whole state. The bill also requires that agencies demonstrate measurable improvement in services to the public. This approach to budgeting will ensure state government spending reflects the priorities and values of the public.



Elections:

The elections held in November 2004 raised a lot of questions as to the efficiency and accuracy of our system. This session we passed a package of election reform bills that will make major improvements to our electoral process. Voters, citizens' groups, and election officials from all over the state were all involved in drafting the legislation. Some of these reforms are:

Provisional Ballots: Regulates the handling and security of provisional ballots and requires auditors to notify a voter within three days if the signature does not match.

Signature verification: Creates a new set of guidelines on how to verify a voter's signature. When voting at the poll you'll need identification before signing the book. It can be a photo ID such as a driver's license or state identification card, student identification card, or tribal identification card; a voter ID, or a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check or other government document. If a person cannot provide identification as required by this section, he or she will be issued a provisional ballot.

State-wide Voter Database: Requires the Secretary of State to quarterly review, update and correct the voter registration list.

Proof of Citizenship: The voter registration form clearly states the applicant must be a U.S. citizen. It includes a warning that it is a Class C felony to provide false information.

Military voters: Return envelope for mail ballots must have a box the voter can check to indicate a member of the armed forces or an overseas voter.



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Do you have any ideas or comments? If you feel “there ought to be a law”, let us know! Citizen participation is vital to the legislative process, help us serve you better: share your thoughts. Just cut this section, and use this card to send us a note.



Please share my comments with: ☐ Rep. Al O'Brien ☐ Rep. Mark Ericks ☐ Both

Comments: _____

Name (optional): _____

Contact info (optional): _____



A Report to the 1st Legislative District



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Al O'Brien

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Dear Neighbors:

As you know, we write the state budget every two years and it's always a difficult task that involves many, many hours of hard work. But it pays off; we're pleased with the budget we passed this year.

We not only preserved critical programs and services despite having to face a significant gap, but also managed to make intelligent investments in our priority areas:

- Education
- Health care
- Jobs
- Transportation

These are the issues that matter most because they affect you directly. Keeping that in mind throughout the entire session, we focused on real-world legislation.

We're proud to share this legislative report with you. Feel free to contact us with your comments and ideas. We're here to serve you.

Sincerely,

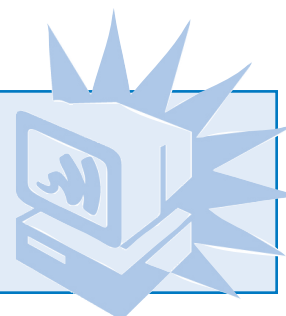
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State Representatives • 1st Legislative District

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A Report to the 1st Legislative District

Education:

Our work this session reflects our commitment to Washington's kids. The new operating budget fully funds teacher-raises and class-size reductions. It also expands the Learning Assistance Program, provides more funding for special education, and emphasizes student-help to meet strict new graduation requirements. We also invested more than \$600 million in much-needed school construction.

Colleges and universities

A few decades ago a person could reach financial independence without a professional degree. Today it's a whole different ball game. Most high-paying jobs these days are only going to educated, highly skilled men and women. The more qualifications you have, the better the chances you'll land the job of your dreams.

In 2008, the largest high-school graduating class in state history will knock on the doors of our colleges and universities. Unless we create more room, almost 22,000 students will be turned away.

That's why we're acting now by passing sensible legislation aimed at improving and expanding our state's colleges and universities, as well as allocating more funds for financial aid:

- Expansion of two UW branch campuses that will be admitting freshmen/sophomores and offering lower division courses beginning fall 2006.
- Expansion of programs and capacity for transfer and graduate students.
- Four community colleges will offer applied BA degrees under a pilot program.
- Expansion of eligibility for state need grants to students enrolled for as few as four credits, instead of six.
- 7,900 new enrollments will be added at the state's colleges and universities (\$72.6 million).
- More financial aid: almost \$70 million in new funds for the State Need Grant.

Health Care:

This session we reached important goals in health care issues. They include:

- **Bulk buying:** We created a Prescription Drug Purchasing Consortium to allow local governments, private businesses, unions and uninsured citizens to join the state savings program.
- **Canadian drugs:** We led the effort to reduce Rx-drug costs through safe and responsible import policies.
- **Drugs discount programs:** We created a nonprofit foundation to help uninsured, low-income individuals obtain free or low cost medicines directly from the manufacturers.
- **Mental Health Parity:** We enacted a "mental health parity" law that will bar insurers from requiring higher co-pays, deductibles or other out-of-pocket expenses for mental health treatment than they require for other medical services.
- **Health Insurance for kids:** We enacted a law that will cover all Washington children by 2011, and reauthorizes the state-funded Children's Health Program to provide coverage for poor children who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid.



Representative Al O'Brien

Safety and Security:

We pass many bills every year to increase your safety and security; bills destined to enhance your family's well-being and promote a better quality of life. Here are a few examples of some of these measures:

Good Samaritan Bill:

Say you're walking down the street and you see someone badly injured, you'd most likely call for help, right? Sounds like common sense but unfortunately, it isn't. That's why this session, after almost a decade of work, Rep. Al O'Brien introduced—and the Legislature finally passed—a bill that requires people who witness a crime where someone is substantially hurt to call for help, as long as that call doesn't put them in danger.

Spyware and Phishing: If you own a computer but you're not familiar with these terms, consider yourself lucky. These are computer crimes and they are affecting more and more people in our state. Internet fraud and computer



intrusion complaints rose 66 percent in the last year, and computer users need the best protection against criminal attacks. We targeted "spyware" (malicious programs that can hijack computers and steal information) and "phishing" (sending out fraudulent e-mails and soliciting private information), and strengthened penalties for those crimes.

Cell Phone Users' Privacy: One less thing you'll have to worry about is your cell-phone number being distributed without your approval. We made it illegal for a wireless service to put any subscriber's cell-phone number into a phone directory without first obtaining the express consent of the customer.

Animal Cruelty: Animals can't defend themselves from cruel people, especially when cruelty has many forms. A bill we passed this session expands the definition of first degree animal cruelty to include starving, dehydrating, or suffocating an animal, causing it to suffer excessive pain or death. This type of negligence, considered a misdemeanor under previous law, is now a felony.



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Jobs:

House Democrats worked hard in a number of ways to move our economy forward. We have to be proactive about where the jobs of the future will come from. That's why this session we passed legislation that invests in our businesses, our infrastructure, and most important, our people:

Job Development Fund:

This bill was sponsored by Rep. Mark Ericks to address a top priority of local governments and Economic Development Councils throughout the state. The fund provides grants to cities, towns and other government entities for projects that create local jobs, stimulate economic development, and promote community growth.



Economic Development Strategic Account:

An adjunct to Rep. Ericks' bill above, this account was created to recruit businesses to the state and encourage existing businesses to expand. Funds from the account can be used for workforce training programs, needed public infrastructure or other initiatives that benefit local businesses.

Public Works Trust Fund Loan Program: An estimated 6,000 new construction jobs and more than \$620 million dollars in economic activity will be generated as a result of low or no-interest loans to communities for bridges, roads, domestic water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and solid waste projects.

Apprenticeships: We passed a measure that calls for apprentices to comprise at least 15 percent of the total labor hours on public projects that are estimated to cost \$1 million or more.

Life Sciences Discovery Fund: This fund will use part of the state's tobacco settlement money to spur research in life sciences technology. This investment will help make the state a leader in bio-technology research and development: it will show that Washington is committed to science research; it will bring health care breakthroughs and create more than 20,000 new high-paying jobs.

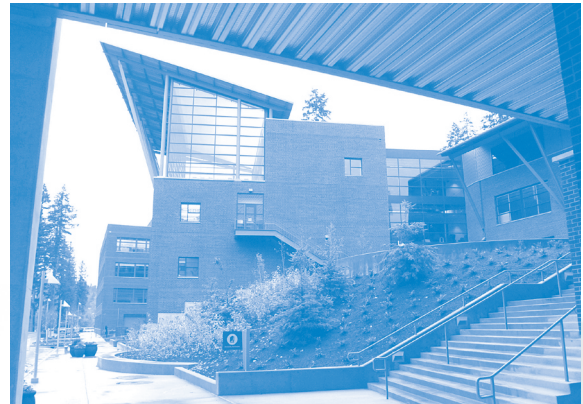


Transportation:

As more people make Washington State their home, the need to reinforce our infrastructure only grows bigger. Bridges and highways across our state are at risk of failure. Continuing to put off these improvements is endangering lives and slowing our economy. That's why this session we passed legislation to get people moving safely and efficiently. The revenue package we passed this year raises \$8.5 billion for new investments in roads, highways and bridges across the state.

In the 1st District alone we're investing almost \$724 million. Some highlights include:

- \$417.5 million for I-405 improvements and repairs
- \$213.2 million for SR 9 widening and corridor improvements
- \$41 million for SR 522 improvements and repairs, including the UW Bothell Cascadia Community College campus access
- \$37.8 million for I-5 improvements and repairs



Clean cars

Another important piece of legislation we passed this year was adopting stricter car emissions standards that will take effect in 2009. Reducing car emissions protects our families from harmful pollutants, fights global climate change and reduces our dependence on imported oil.

